

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 21-33 remain pending in the application. Claims 1-20 has been remain cancelled. Claims 22, 24, 26-29 and 32 have been amended to improve claim language only.

The Examiner requests Applicants provide clarification of the correlation and identification of what structure, material, or acts set forth in the specification would be capable of carrying out a function recited in a means or steps plus function claim limitation and each new claim, support for each limitation by referring to the drawings using figure and line numbers and to the specification using page and line number. In response, Applicants explain and present the support for each claim with candor and good faith under 37 CFR 1.56 as follows.

Claims 21-33 are reproduced below with the support followed each claim feature. Claim 21 recites that lifting means (*crane 4*) for unloading the weapon (*mortar 1*) down on the ground from the vehicle and putting the weapon back on the vehicle (*see Figs. 3a-3d and page 4 line 23 and page 6 line 14 of the specification*);

an interface configured to connect said lifting means (*crane 4*) and said weapon (*mortar 1*), the interface comprising a retractable structure (*3*) having a short rigid ("taut") connection allowing the weapon to be load on the vehicle and to put the weapon down on the ground when the retractable structure retracts (*see Figs. 3b to 3c and the part of the specification relating to Figs. 3b to 3c, also see Fig. 5a and page 7, line 36 to page 8, line 2 of the specification*) and a loose connection allowing the weapon to move relative to the vehicle when it is relaxed, while keeping a link between the weapon and the carrying vehicle (*see Figs.3d and on page 6, line 12 to line 14 of the specification*);

wherein said lifting means (*crane 4*) is configured to remove the weapon from the vehicle before lifting the weapon down (*see Fig. 3c*) and configured to position the weapon on the vehicle after lifting the weapon up (*see Fig. 3a*).

Claim 22 recites that, among other things, one flexible element (*32*) connecting the lifting means to the weapon (*see Fig.3d and page 6, line 35 to line 37 of the specification*); a traction

member (31) configured to relax and retract the flexible element (*see Fig. 3d and page 6, line 37 to page 7, line 2 of the specification*).

Claim 23 recites that uncoupling means for uncoupling the flexible element from the weapon, and configured to be manually operable (*See, Figs. 6a and 6b*).

Claim 24 recites that said retractable structure (3) comprises self-centring elements (60, 61) configured to be engaged with one another when the flexible element is retracted, and configured to maintain, when in contact, their position against forces that tend to apply shear to the flexible element (*see on page 7, line 16 to line 19 of the specification*).

Claim 25 recites that the self-centring elements comprise a male cone (60) and a female cone (61), configured to engage with each other (*see Fig. 4b , also see page 7, line 10 to line 12 and line 20 to line 21*).

Claim 26 recites that the retractable structure comprises means (8) positioned at one end of the flexible element and configured to hold the weapon (*mortar 1*) (*see Fig.5b, also see page 8, line 4 to line 6*).

Claims 27 and 28 recite the similar features of claim 26, and find their support at *Fig.5b, also at page 8, line 4 to line 6*.

Claim 29 recites that said means comprise jaws (80, 81) configured to lockable (*lock 82*) engage with a tubular part of the weapon (*see Fig.5b also see page 8, line 4 to line 6*).

Claim 30 recites the said lifting means comprise a crane (4), said crane comprising: a first arm (40) rotatably positioned on a rear platform of the vehicle and configured to move the mortar above the ground behind the vehicle (*see Fig.3b and page 4, line 35 to page 5 line 9*); a second arm (41) rotatably positioned at the free end of the first arm, the second arm being configured to put the weapon away from the rear of the vehicle into the appropriate position to be set down on the ground (*see Fig.3c and page 5, line 10 to line 13 and line 20 to line 22*).

Claim 31 recites the similar features of claim 30, and finds its support at *Fig.3c and page 5, line 10 to line 13 and line 20 to line 22*.

Claim 32 recites that the retractable interface (3) further comprises a forked gantry (30) fixed to the second arm (41) of the crane and two flexible elements (32), one element being placed within each fork of the gantry, the forked gantry and the two flexible elements (32) being configured and arranged to hold the weapon by each of its sides (*see Fig. 4a and page 6, line 1 to line 2 of the specification*).

In view of above, it is respectfully submitted that the present application should be in condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Early issuance of a Notice of Allowance is courteously solicited.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned, Applicant's attorney of record, to facilitate advancement of the present application.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 07-1337 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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